Code-switching to English in the German as a Second Foreign Language Classroom:
The Case of Turkish Learners
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1 Introduction

This study is built upon an understanding of a wide range of variables including foreign language education in Turkey, the sociolinguistic profile of English, the phenomena of code-switching, language transfer (in particular second language transfer in third language production), teaching of a second foreign language after English, plurilingualism in Europe and ELT curricula in Turkey.

The aim of the presentation was to raise awareness not just about a single phenomenon like code-switching from English (L2) to German (L3) by Turkish (L1) learners, but about a collection of connected variables that may impinge on the plurilingual nature of Europe in the future, regardless of whether Turkey's application for EU membership is accepted. Furthermore, the presentation was also an attempt to introduce a new variable to the Multiple Effects Principle (henceforth MEP) put forward by Selinker & Lakshmanan (1993), which refers to some variables that affect second language (henceforth L2) transfer in third language (henceforth L3) production.

2 English and German as foreign languages in the Turkish educational system

Since the 1950s, English has become the most popular foreign language in Turkey and has gained prominence in various educational, economic, socio-political and socio-cultural settings. Within the domain of education, and specifically in the context of teaching English as a foreign language, it has not only been learned in all state and private schools at all levels, but has also been the medium of instruction in many non-language subjects.

At present, 819 of the 6459 high schools in Turkey are English-medium. Additionally, English is the medium of instruction in 26 universities. In the case of German, there are 17 German-medium high schools (König et al., 2005; Kılıçkaya, 2006) and it is a well-known fact that German is the most

popular second foreign language in Turkey. Furthermore, there are a number of German-medium departments in Turkish universities. Officially, English is a compulsory subject from the fourth year of primary education, however, in some state schools and in private institutions, the starting age is seven, or in some cases even in pre-school education, between the ages of five and seven.

3 The sociolinguistic profile of the English language in Turkey

Büyükkantarcıoğlu (2004) relates the popularity of the English language in Turkey to socio-political and socioeconomic developments, scientific/technological developments, the media, education, international travel and gearing state officials towards learning a foreign language. It cannot be denied that these factors have influenced the present popularity of English in Turkey, however, additional elements should be considered. According to Doğançay-Aktuna (1998, p.27) "it was for the sake of modernization and westernization that English was readily adopted by the Turkish governments and gained precedence over other foreign languages". This government tendency has also been adopted by individuals and a trend has emerged of regarding speaking English and using English words in daily discourse as a sign of prestige related to the idea of modernization and westernization.

Although problems of foreign language and Turkish language planning may have played the most significant role in this uncontrolled spread of English in daily Turkish discourse, the sociopsychological phenomenon of *regarding English as the most prestigious language* has led to interesting instances of lexical borrowings. This can be observed in daily speech as well as in the media. For example, in a recent T.V. interview, a member of parliament said /Tur./ "Durumu *egzecere* ediyorsunuz" (/Eng./ "You are *exaggerating* the case") instead of /Tur./ "Durumu abartıyorsunuz" or some other appropriate Turkish expression. The problem is that what the politician says is not comprehensible to most of those who voted for him, which leads to a lack of mutual intelligibility among speakers of the same L1.

Accordingly, it may be claimed that this example is more than a lexical borrowing, as it does not fill a gap in the Turkish language, has no place in a Turkish dictionary, and it violates mutual

intelligibility. In addition, the counter argument that this term is being newly introduced and that the current problem of unintelligibility results from the generation gap etc. is not applicable. I would like to suggest that this is an absurd example of code-switching indicating the socio-psychological phenomenon of regarding the use of English lexis in L1 sentences as something prestigious. This claim will become clearer after a closer look at the concept of code-switching in different settings and in particular within the scope of L2 transfer to L3.

4 Code-switching and lemma transfer

Code-switching may briefly be defined as the phenomenon of switching the languages used during a conversation between bilinguals/multilinguals. It may be observed in multilingual communities, in which speakers may switch to their native tongue or to a lingua franca for a wide range of intentions, either consciously, or unconsciously. It is also the source for pidgins and creoles (code-mixing[1], rather than code-switching is mostly claimed to be the source in many studies), which have been the result of language contact situations among communities for specific purposes (like trade or war).

Furthermore, following the widespread emergence of bilingual classrooms in recent decades, mainly due to immersion programmes for immigrants and minorities, a growing body of research has focused on the analysis of code-switching in educational settings and particularly in foreign language classes. Though the topic was introduced and discussed by building connections to language interference, mainly indicating a negative effect of the first language on the second, the instances of language transfer have acquired a distinct role as signs of multilingual and cognitive development drawing upon the theories put forward by many scholars, especially after pioneering studies on multilingualism and second language transfer in natural and educational contexts.

Another type of language transfer, called lemma transfer, mainly focussed on psycholinguistic aspects of the topic under discussion. Conceptual information is linked to grammatical function

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[1] Code-mixing is the mixing of linguistic units in at least two codes within a sentence, so it is intrasentential whereas code-switching is the mixing of linguistic units in at least two codes across sentence boundaries, so it is intersentential. Hereafter, both intrasentential and intersentential switching will be referred to as code-switching, as is the case in many of the studies referred to.

through lemmas, which, according to Wei (2006, p.89), are "abstract entries in the mental lexicon and underlie the speaker's construction of the surface form". Within the framework of this study, lemma transfers found in the data will be grouped as: (1) lemma transfer in lexical-conceptual structure and (2) lemma transfer in morphological realisation patterns. While presenting the data for code-switching, the categories will draw distinctions between: (1) lexical transfer, (2) morphological transfer and (3) semantic transfer. All these concepts, which may be new to some readers, will become clearer once the data has been presented in section 6.

5 Method

The research took place in a privately founded language course in Ankara, Turkey. The students in the class (all native speakers of Turkish, upper intermediate - advanced level speakers of English) aimed to obtain a German language certificate at pre-intermediate level. The age of the 9 students ranged from 20 to 26 and all of them were either graduates of or students at English-medium universities. The teacher of the class was a trilingual (Tur-L1, Ger-L2, Eng-L3) with a considerable level of English.

From a total of 48 hours of instruction, data was collected during 24 class hours spread over a period of 2 months. 112 code-switching samples and 33 lemma transfer samples from L2 (English) to L3 (German) have been analyzed in order to identify the underlying reasons for these transfers. In the following section, some of these samples will be introduced in relation to the aforementioned categories. The findings will be evaluated in section 7 in the light of MEP and this will be followed by sections covering pedagogical implications for the teaching of a second foreign language after English, plurilingualism in Europe and the recently launched undergraduate ELT curriculum in Turkey.

6 The data

It should be noted that no transfers from L1 (Turkish) to L3 (German) were observed during the collection of the data. The phenomena of code-switching and lemma transfer will become clearer during the presentation of the samples in different categories.

6.1 Lexical transfer

(1):

— Teacher: Murat? Was denkst du?

— Student: Das Leben ist exciting. (content word)

(2):

— Student: Die Mankind braucht Frieden.

— Student: Aber... (content word)

(3):

— Student: Anitkabir ist wichtig for Ankara.

— Student: Ja... (function word)

(4):

— Teacher: Ist es klein?

— Student: Es ist klein, but nicht schlecht.(function word)

6.2 Morphological transfer

(5):

— Teacher: Ist er ehrlich?

— Student: Nein, er ist disehrlich.(bound morpheme)

(6):

— Student: Die Buchs gehören Yasemin.(bound morpheme)

(7):

— Student: Er komms drei mal...(bound morpheme)

6.3 Semantic transfer

(8):

— Teacher: Was ist groß*art*ig?

— Student: Malen ist ein großartig!!!

(9):

— Student: Mein Vater hat mir ein Auto […] vergiften.

A close look at (8) and (9) indicates that the words *grossartig* and *vergiften* are instances of 'semantic transfer' from L2 to L3. It is obvious that the word *groß*art*ig* (which means *great*) is used to mean *fine arts*, mainly resulting from the misinterpretation of the word part art within the lexeme. Furthermore, the word *great* is an adjective as opposed to the grammatical class of *fine arts* which is a noun. The word *vergiften* means *to poison* but was misinterpreted by the learner as *to give as a gift* or *present* due to the word *gift* hidden in the verb *ver*gift*en*.

6.4 Lemma transfer in lexical conceptual structure

It is clear that words do not solely consist of a phonological and lexical value, but their representation in the mind carries particular grammatical, semantic and pragmatic information which is language specific. With this in mind, the use of *bekommen* instead of *werden* in (10) below and *getan* instead of *gemacht* in (11) are instances of lemma transfer in lexical-conceptual structure.

(10):

— Teacher: Arzt oder Lehrer?

— Student: Ich will ein Arzt bekommen.

— /Eng./: I want to *become* a doctor.

(11):

— Student: Ich habe die Hausaufgabe getan.

— /Eng./: I've *done* the homework.

6.5 Lemma transfer in morphological realisation patterns

(12):

— Student: *Ich kann sprechen Englisch. SVO

— /Eng./ I can speak English. SVO

— /Ger./ Ich kann Englisch sprechen. SOV

— /Tur./ (Ben) Ingilizce konuşabilirim. SOV

Lemmas in morphological realisation patterns include surface devices for word order, tense/aspect marking, agreement etc. In this example, like the ones in the rest of the data, it is evident that the student tends to transfer the word order of English and therefore produces a syntactically incorrect utterance. It is interesting to note that the Turkish translation of the correct German utterance has the same word order properties as the German sentence; so the student tends to make the transfer from her L2 rather than her L1.

The data can be analysed as follows:

Content words	42
Function words	36
Bound Morphemes	34
Lemma transfer in lexical conceptual structure	9
Lemma transfer in morphological realisation patterns	24

7 Multiple Effects Principle

L2 transfer in L3 production cannot solely result from a single factor, but it emerges mainly following the interaction of several factors. Murphy (2003) groups these variables as learner-based variables (proficiency, amount of target language exposure and use, language mode, linguistic awareness, age, educational background, and context) and language-based variables (language

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typology, frequency, word class and morphological transfer). As not all of these variables can be covered in this summary, only those will be discussed for which counter evidence was supplied after the analysis of the data collected in a Turkish context. Furthermore, a new variable, the sociolinguistic profile of L2, will be suggested.

It is commonly believed that much L2 → L3 transfer is the result of low L3 proficiency, however, studies of trilinguals (Turkish (L1), German (advanced), English (advanced))(König et al., 2005; Cedden&Onaran, 2005) provide counter evidence. The subjects in these studies used a considerable number of English structures in German sentences. It has also been shown in a large number of studies that lexical transfer during L3 production is more likely to involve function rather than content words (Murphy, 2003), however, in this study 42 L2 content words and 37 L2 function words were detected in L3 production. This is a noteworthy difference, bearing in mind that the findings of this study signal a different variable for the Multiple Effects Principle. This variable, which will be referred to as 'the sociolinguistic profile of L2', is significant due to the large number of content words transferred from English.

As mentioned in section 3, there is a tendency to use English content words in daily Turkish discourse, which cannot be explained by the concept of lexical borrowing, but seems to be closer to code-switching (in this case, switching to the code which is regarded as prestigious). This tendency has come to the surface in the L3 (German) production of Turkish students, who are either students of or graduates of English-medium universities in Turkey, but are native speakers of Turkish and use English only in educational settings. However, it is well known that in Turkey, exposure to English is not restricted to classroom settings, although it is a 'foreign' language. Whilst concepts such as the *talk foreign* mode (Selinker &Baumgartner-Cohen,1995), the *association of foreignness* (De Angelis, 2005), the *last language effect* (Shanon, 1991) and *psychotypology* (Kellerman,1986) stand alongside the findings of this study, they do not provide adequate explanations as the underlying reasons for L2 transfer emerge from the interaction of different variables.

Furthermore, instead of simply questioning 'the sociolinguistic profile of English in Turkey' within the debate of linguistic imperialism, more constructive steps should be taken. The following

questions need to be answered: How can educators and policy makers make use of this L2 effect considering the current orientation in Turkey towards a plurilingual Europe? What are the pedagogical implications for the teaching of other modern languages (after English)? What steps has the Turkish government taken towards raising awareness about the transition from an English-only foreign language learning mentality to plurilingual European citizenship? In the following sections, attempts will be made to address these issues.

8 Pedagogical implications for the teaching of an L3 after English

In introducing the term multi-competence, Cook (1992) stresses the strong metalinguistic awareness, greater creativity and cognitive flexibility of multilingual individuals. It has been suggested that language transfer should be regarded as a sign of learners' multilingual and cognitive development rather than interference. With reference to the data in this study, lexical and morphological transfer can be tolerated to some extent, but semantic transfer and lemma transfer should be carefully handled to prevent fossilization. Contrary to the lexical and morphological code-switching samples in our data, which help to pursue communication and language production, semantic transfer samples seem to violate mutual intelligibility. With pedagogical concerns, therefore, it may be suggested that semantic transfer should be avoided and immediately corrected by the teacher, since the primary function of language, which is communication, is violated. The instances of code-switching in this study help students produce more target language utterances and prevent breaks in communication, which could be seen as productive as the students do not have the opportunity to be exposed to or to produce target language structures outside the classroom.

For Merkelbach (2006, p.5-6), European languages exhibit relationships on a grammatical and lexical level which offer help during L3 acquisition. A foreign language curriculum can be initiated that includes learning strategies, their acquisition and use, and the interrelationships between languages in order to help students learn more foreign languages faster and more easily. For example, Oebel (2007) presents an applicable framework for teaching German (L3) to Japanese learners through English (L2) with morphological, syntactic, grammatical and semantic

considerations. Similar attempts can be made for the speakers of other languages, like Turkish, which would contribute to the development of plurilingual competence.

9 Plurilingualism in Europe and the new ELT Curriculum in Turkey

As a lingua-franca, the English language has a mediating role, which may be a bridge to a plurilingual Europe. The Council of Europe clearly declares that:

> The aim of language education is profoundly modified. It is no longer seen as simply to achieve 'mastery' of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the 'ideal native speaker' as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place. This implies, of course, that the languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified and students given the opportunity to develop a plurilingual competence.

It has been observed that the current Turkish government has a closer relationship with the EU and this has had clear implications for the Educational system in Turkey. The new curricula for English, German, and French Language Teaching departments include compulsory second foreign language courses. So undergraduate students in ELT departments are encouraged to be able to communicate, not only in English, but also in other Indo-European languages like German, French, Italian and Spanish. In addition, the number of students involved in student exchange programmes in Europe is increasing rapidly. Furthermore, new courses such as Multilingualism and Plurilingualism have been added to postgraduate programmes to heighten the awareness of post-graduate students.

10 Conclusion

Throughout this paper, the issue of second language transfer during third language production has been discussed from various perspectives and the findings of the study, driven by the empirical data, have been used to address to a wide range of issues. The analysis represents an interactive and mutual involvement of micro and macro phenomena ranging from second language transfer, code-

switching and the sociolinguistic profile of English to foreign language education policies and plurilingualism.

The study will hopefully contribute to literature in this field, firstly by introducing a new concept to the variables that affect L2 transfer in L3 production, namely 'the sociolinguistic profile of L2' and secondly by suggesting the types of language transfers which may occur in the foreign language classroom and how they should be dealt with appropriately in the teaching of a second foreign language. Additionally, a broader understanding of this paper could raise awareness about the essence of plurilingualism and its outcomes in building a European community through learning diverse languages.

The learning of languages, in this sense, will lead to intercultural empathy and will help citizens of different countries overcome cultural barriers. Furthermore, it is an expected goal that learning foreign languages will help to promote peace between different countries and communities. From a psycholinguistic perspective, it can be claimed that the number of languages an individual can speak is correlated directly to his or her level of cognitive creativity and flexibility. It should be kept in mind that an individual who can speak three languages, for instance, will have three ways to approach a problem, three ways to understand a cultural or social phenomenon and three ways of expressing him or herself. It is worth noting that the English language has a primary role for many people around the world for plurilingual and multilingual development and for creating intercultural awareness.

Please note that this is a summarised version of the presentation; more detailed information was supplied at the conference.

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